

Issues - Environment

Environment

Rep. Slaughter is a long-time supporter of protecting our natural resources. She was inspired to seek elective office after joining with neighbors in an attempt to save Hart's Woods, a local forest, from development.

Rep. Slaughter introduced legislation that would have been the first-ever federal grant program for recycling in 1991 and has taken a leadership role on the need to recycle the growing pile of used computers, which contain hazardous material. In the past few years, Congresswoman Slaughter secured \$5 million to fund a study, demonstration project, and construction phase aimed at cleaning up Charlotte Beach in Rochester. Rep. Slaughter recently secured \$100,000 for 18 Mile Creek in Niagara County and \$200,000 to dredge Oak Orchard Harbor in Orleans County. She was also successful in obtaining over \$5 million to conduct a five year study on the water levels of Lake Ontario and examine environmental impacts over the past fifty years on the lake.

Protecting the Great Lakes

As a member of the Great Lakes Task Force, Congresswoman Slaughter has actively worked on federal legislation, appropriations, and regulations affecting the Great Lakes environment.

- Original cosponsor of the Great Lakes Environmental Restoration Act. The bipartisan bill will establish a \$4 billion Great Lakes Trust Fund and coordinate efforts to clean up the Great Lakes.

- Supported funding to create the Great Lakes Research Institute.

- Successfully lobbied for a supplemental study to consider environmental factors as the US Corps of Engineers conducts a Great Lakes Navigation System review. The review would involve dredging hundreds of millions of yards of Great Lakes channels and St. Lawrence River sediment for deeper, larger ships. Without this Congressional oversight, the project could re-release this pollution, lower lake levels, increase shoreline erosion and destroy critical wetlands and wildlife habitat.
- Voted to authorize \$250 million for cleanup of contaminated sediment areas in need of remediation.
- Cosponsored bills to create a comprehensive program to dramatically reduce the threat from aquatic invasive species.
- Led the Congressional effort to fund the International Joint Commission's study into the water levels of Lake Ontario. The study will examine past environmental impacts on Lake Ontario and future trends, such as climate change, on the water level.
- Voted to prohibit oil or gas drilling in any of the Great Lakes.
- Testified before the International Joint Commission in opposition to exporting Great Lakes water; also cosponsored legislation to prohibit the sale of Great Lakes water.
- Cosponsored the Great Lakes Ecology Protection Act, a bill to reduce the number of non-native species entering the Great Lakes area that are polluting the water and fouling water intake systems.
- Sent several letters in support of funding for research and cleanup efforts in the Great Lakes, including the Great Lakes fish and wildlife restoration program, the soil erosion and sediment control program, the National Sea Grant College program, and money to assist municipalities with sewer upgrades.

Enhancing our Local and Regional Natural and Recreational Resources

Congresswoman Slaughter has successfully pursued her interest in preserving local historical landmarks and unique natural resources.

- Sent a letter to the U.S. Forest Service expressing her opposition to a proposal to allow oil and gas drilling in the Finger Lakes National Forest.
- Pushed for EPA's clean-up plan, which calls for removing over 100,000 pounds of PCBs from the most contaminated portions of the upper Hudson River.
- Secured federal funding for local recreational and environmental trails, including the Canal Greenway, Seaway Trail, and Seneca Trail. Rep. Slaughter delivered the opening address at the New York State Seaway Byway Conference held

in Rochester.

- Cosponsored legislation to transfer Governors Island back to New York State.
- Cosponsored bill to acquire and preserve 17,500 acres of the Sterling Forest along the New York - New Jersey border.
- Authored and passed legislation improving the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls. The five-acre complex includes the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, the site of the first Convention on the Rights of Women in 1848; the M'Clintock House, where the Convention's "Declaration of Sentiments" was written; and the home of Elizabeth Cady Stanton.
- Authored and passed legislation to designate a Women's Rights National Historic Trail administered by the National Park Service.
- Cosponsored legislation to allocate \$25 billion, over five years, to fund clean water capital investments.
- Supported funding the historic American Landscape Survey.
- Following the ice storm of March 1991, secured funds for the replanting of trees in the Rochester area's historic parks.

Combating Air Pollution and Global Warming

As a member of the House Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Caucus, Congresswoman Slaughter has taken a leadership role in promoting alternative energy sources that promote both economic growth and cleaner air.

- Voted to increase the fuel efficiency standards on automobiles and light trucks, including sport utility vehicles (SUVs). Due to the fact that two-thirds of all the oil consumed in the United States is used to power automobiles, this proposal to increase the fuel standards would save billions of gallons of oil.
- Cosponsored the Clean Smokestacks Act, a bill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as called for in the Rio Convention, and sent President Bush a letter urging him to continue U.S. participation in the Kyoto Treaty.
- Cosponsored several bills to reduce acid rain, which has damaged the Adirondack mountains.
- Opposed the Bush Administration's proposal to cut \$332 million for key conservation and renewable energy programs.
- Sent letters to the EPA Administrator objecting to efforts to weaken the Clean Air Act's New Source Review, which require coal-fired power plants and refineries to install anti-pollution equipment as they upgrade their facilities.
- In her own office, provides a modest subsidy to employees who take public transportation to work rather than drive.

Protecting our National Resources and Heritage

As a member of the Environmental Task Force, Congresswoman Slaughter has supported existing environmental laws, and pushed for assistance to local governments, communities, and individuals in their planning and economic development efforts.

- Authored the Small Communities Assistance bill, which would help small communities comply with environmental laws.
- Cosponsored the Endangered Species Recovery Act, a bill to strengthen the Endangered Species Act to ensure the recovery of our Nation's declining biological diversity and to reaffirm this Nation's commitment to protect wildlife.
- Cosponsored several pieces of legislation to protect wilderness areas in different states, including the Morris K. Udall Wilderness Act to designate certain lands in Alaska as wilderness components of the National Wilderness Preservation System; the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act to designate areas in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming as wilderness and protected areas; and America's Red Rock Wilderness Act to designate certain lands in Utah as wilderness.
- Opposed the Bush Administration's rollback of the Roadless Area Conservation Policy, which would protect 58.5 million acres of federal lands from logging and commercial development.
- Cosponsored the Arctic Refuge Wilderness Bill, which will protect portions of Alaska's North Slope from drilling. Rep. Slaughter voted to continue the ban on oil and gas exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge during consideration of the Bush energy plan. Although more than 90 percent of Alaska's North Slope is available for drilling, international petroleum companies are pushing Congress to open the entire coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge to oil and gas exploration and development. Rep. Slaughter supports permanently protecting the ecologically fragile coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge and its wildlife.
- Cosponsored the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA), a bill to direct \$3 billion annually be used for the purchase of environmentally sensitive lands and other conservation programs. CARA would fully fund the Lands Legacy Initiative, which guarantees permanent funding for the protection of open space to combat urban and suburban sprawl. The legislation would also authorize \$1 billion for coastal states, including the Great Lakes states, to mitigate the environmental impacts of offshore oil development. In addition, the legislation would increase funding for state fish and wildlife programs, and increase incentives for private landowners to conserve endangered species. Under this bill, New York State would receive approximately \$100 million per year.

Encouraging Responsible Environmental Policies

As a member of the powerful Rules Committee, Congresswoman Slaughter has played an instrumental role in opposing the majority's attempts to weaken strong environmental initiatives being considered in the House of Representatives.

- Voted against the Private Property Rights Implementation Act. The bill would allow developers to sue for "takings" directly in federal court, bypassing state courts. This legislative change would allow big developers to use the threat of costly federal court litigation as an incentive for small communities to approve projects that may violate environmental standards.
- Opposed efforts to attach anti-environmental riders to appropriations bills.
- Opposed legislative efforts to weaken the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the California Desert Preservation Act.
- Cosponsored reform of the 1872 Mining Law to ensure that the federal government receives a fair return from the extraction of minerals on federal land.
- Offered a 1996 amendment to exempt federal agency actions safeguarding drinking water, food safety, and meat and poultry inspection from the proposed moratorium on new regulations.